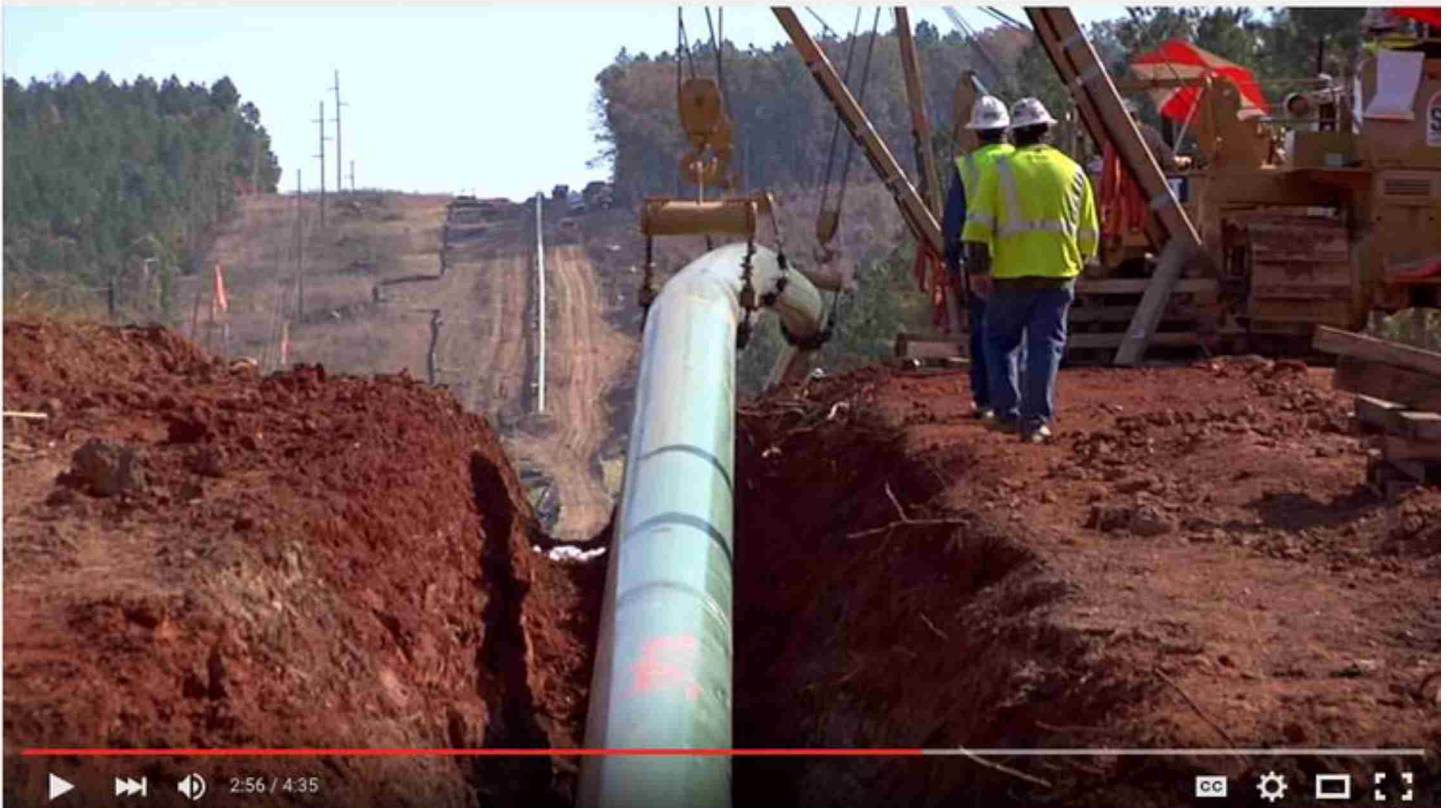

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Subject: N.C. officials emphasize due diligence in Atlantic Coast Pipeline analysis - Triangle Business Journal

N.C. officials emphasize due diligence in Atlantic Coast Pipeline analysis



[Enlarge](#)

This still taken from a Dominion Resources (NYSE:D) video on the Atlantic Coast Pipeline illustrates the process that will be involved in building out that \$5.1 billion project. [See the full video here.](#)

DOMINION RESOURCES INC.

IN THIS ARTICLE

- **Government & Regulations** Industry
- **Michael Regan** Person
- **Tony Copeland** Person



By [Lauren K. Ohnesorge](#) — Senior Staff Writer, Triangle Business Journal
Dec 22, 2017, 8:44am EST **Updated** 2 hours ago

While Atlantic Coast Pipeline officials are still bullish on their timeline for the 600-mile natural gas pipeline, North Carolina environmental regulators continue to sort through the paperwork.

[Michael Regan](#), secretary of the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, said he wants to make sure the project gets a full review – and has directed his team to conduct due diligence required of a project of ACP’s magnitude.

“We’re still going through our permit review process, so you know I could not say that, No. 1, we would be finished with the proper evaluation of all the permits required by the end of the year, let alone render judgement on the information we’re still getting in,” he said. “We are continuing to evaluate the information that has come in for these permits, recognizing that all of the information for these permits has yet to be submitted.”

Regan said his office has had many high-level conversations with officials from the other states impacted by the project – West Virginia and Virginia – but notes that North Carolina “has reserved a right to do what North Carolina has to do to best protect its citizens and the environment.”

When it comes to the required water quality certifications, North Carolina [is the only holdout among the states](#). It has [sent multiple requests for information to ACP](#) as it evaluates whether to permit the pipeline to cross state waterways.

And opponents of the pipeline have commended the state, with one attorney [saying North Carolina is "leading the check" in the process](#).

Regan said diligence can’t be understated – and that it’s not an either-or situation when it comes to the environment and business interests.

“We feel that a very transparent and deliberate process will yield the best results,” he said. “That way ... despite which direction we go, we would feel confident and secure that we have followed the science, we have followed our statutory and regulatory obligations.”

The information asks his agency has issued do “one thing,” he said.

“They give the agency more information to put into these permits so everyone involved better understands what the implications are, and what the actions are that are being asked of the company to take to protect the environment,” he added. With a project the scope of ACP, which involves a 600-mile, three-state trajectory and includes eight North Carolina counties, the state has to get it right, he says. And that requires analyzing all the data. “And I would say we have done it in a very collaborative way in terms of being transparent with all of our stakeholders.”

Economic developers say they appreciate the diligence – but wish approval would happen quickly. Norris Tolson, CEO of Nash and Edgecombe counties’ chief economic development recruiter, the Carolinas Gateway Partnership, has said there are projects considering eastern North Carolina, [but that they’re saying they require more natural gas capacity](#).

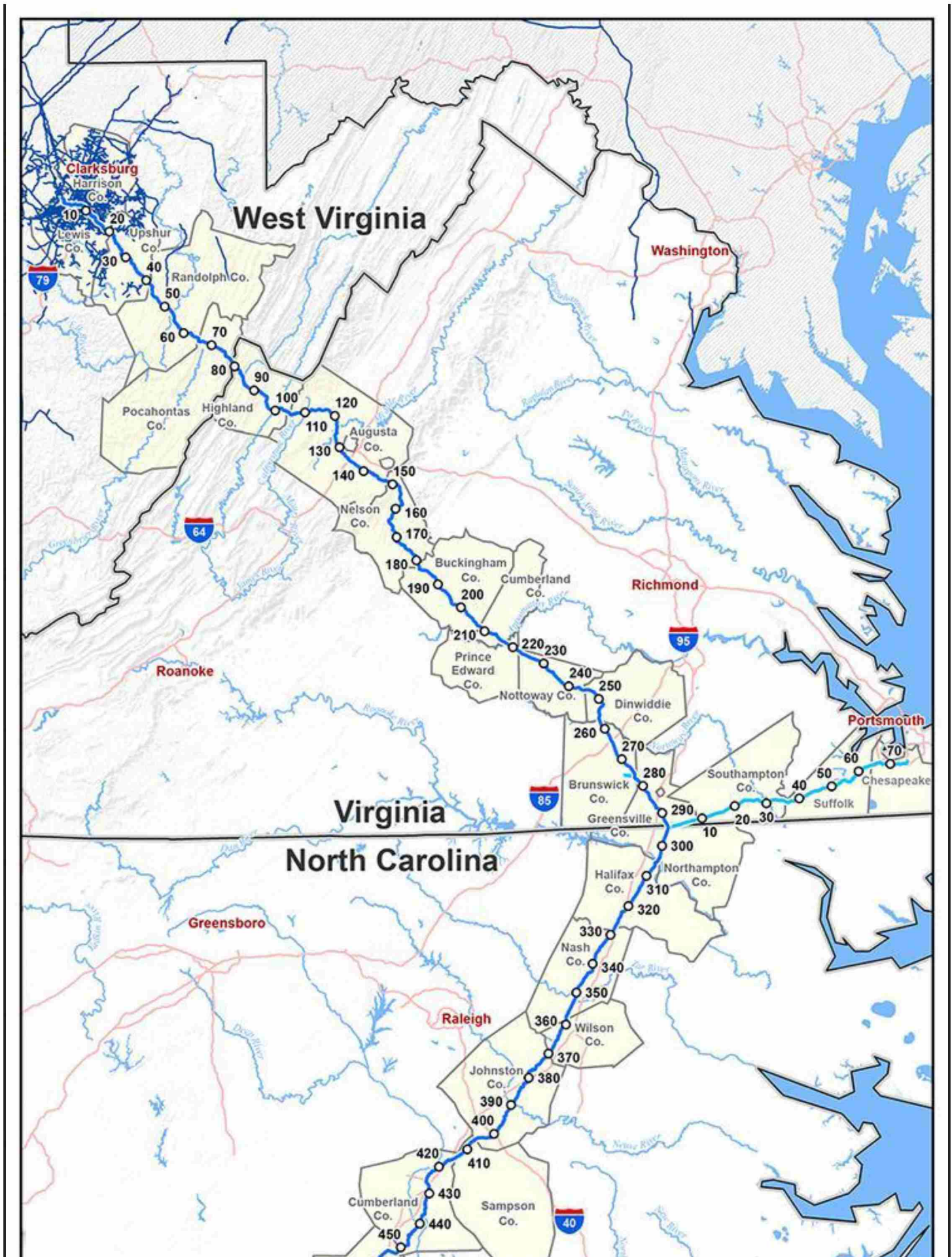
And N.C. Commerce Secretary [Tony Copeland](#) has repeatedly called the ACP critical in rural economic development in the state.

Copeland expects infrastructure improvements to continue to be a major priority for his department's agenda in 2018.

"The Atlantic Coast Pipeline can be an important part of that," he said Thursday. "As a state, we're still working through some issues surrounding that, but it provides a great opportunity to address some of those affordable energy concerns."

For its part, utilities behind the Atlantic Coast Pipeline still believe they're on track to start tree-felling by the end of the year.

In an email Thursday, Aaron Ruby, ACP spokesman, said ACP has "submitted everything to NCDEQ."



Enlarge

Duke Energy and Dominion Resources want to build a natural gas pipeline through three states.

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